



Northern Ireland
Foster Care

Southern Area

FOSTER CARER

Learning & Development Training Schedule

September 2026 - June 2027

0800 0720 137 | adoptionandfostercare.hscni.net |   

To nominate yourself for a place on any course listed on the pages overleaf, please send a brief email, mentioning the course title to the persons below.

**NB:* Please ensure that you include all three in the email, as one or more may be out of office / on annual leave etc.

Alternatively, you can contact the office directly on **028 375 60750** and speak to a member of staff.

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Foster Care Training Schedule

September 2026 - June 2027

Date	Training Course	Time	Format
SEPTEMBER 2026			
Tuesday 8th, 15th & 29th	COTHÚ Workshop <i>3 Sessions - Carers should attend all 3</i>	10:30am - 1pm	Marketplace Theatre, Armagh
Wednesday 9th	Managing Stress in Fostering <i>with Ed Sipler</i>	6:30pm - 8:30pm	Microsoft Teams
Monday 28th September & Monday 5th October	Men Who Foster	6:30pm - 8:30pm	Microsoft Teams
Tuesday 29th	Safeguarding Workshop	7pm - 8pm	Microsoft Teams
OCTOBER 2026			
Wednesday 7th & 14th	Understanding Childhood Trauma and Ways to Nurture Healing <i>2 Sessions - Carers should attend both</i>	10am - 1pm	Epicentre, Armagh
Thursday 8th	Core Issues in Kinship Care	10am - 1pm	Microsoft Teams
Tuesday 13th	The 4 R's	10:30am - 1:30pm	Marketplace Theatre, Armagh
Tuesday 20th	Basic Paediatric First Aid Awareness	10am - 12pm	Microsoft Teams
Wednesday 21st	Making Our Nervous System Work For Us <i>with Ed Sipler</i>	6:30pm - 8:30pm	Microsoft Teams
NOVEMBER 2026			
Wednesday 4th	LGBTQIA+ Awareness Workshop <i>with 'The Rainbow Project'</i>	10am - 1pm	Microsoft Teams
Thursday 12th	ADHD Awareness	10am - 12pm	Microsoft Teams
Saturday 14th	P.A.U.S.E. <i>with A. O'Prey</i> * 3 places per Trust *	9:30am - 4pm	Microsoft Teams
Tuesday 17th	Understanding & Managing Anxiety	10:30am - 12:30pm	Marketplace Theatre, Armagh
DECEMBER 2026			
Tuesday 1st	Safeguarding Workshop	10am - 11am	Microsoft Teams
Tuesday 1st	Building Connections: Brick by Brick	10:30am - 12:30pm	Armagh City Hotel
Wednesday 2nd	Transgender & Non-Binary Awareness	10am - 1pm	Microsoft Teams

Foster Care Training Schedule

September 2026 - June 2027

Date	Training Course	Time	Format
JANUARY 2027			
Tuesday 19th	Basic First Aid	10am - 1pm	Epicentre, Armagh
Wednesday 27th	Basic Paediatric First Aid Awareness	6pm - 8pm	Microsoft Teams
Thursday 28th	Adversity, Trauma & Resilience <i>(Module 1)</i>	10am - 1pm	Microsoft Teams
FEBRUARY 2027			
Thursday 4th	Promoting a Trauma Informed Approach <i>(Module 2)</i>	10am - 1pm	Microsoft Teams
MARCH 2027			
Tuesday 9th	Safeguarding Workshop	7pm - 8pm	Microsoft Teams
Thursday 11th	F.A.S.D. Awareness	10am - 1pm	Microsoft Teams
Thursday 11th	Basic Paediatric First Aid Awareness	10am - 12pm	Microsoft Teams
Saturday 13th	The CALM AFFECT with A. O'Prey <i>(MUST complete PAUSE prior to CALM AFFECT)</i>	10am - 4pm	Microsoft Teams
APRIL 2027			
Wednesday 14th, 21st & 28th	Regulate Together At Home	10am - 12pm	Epicentre, Armagh
Thursday 15th	CSE & HSB Awareness	10am - 1pm	Microsoft Teams
Thursday 22nd & 29th	Core Issues in Fostering <i>This course is comprised of 2 sessions</i>	10am - 1pm	Microsoft Teams
MAY 2027			
Thursday 6th	Recording in Foster Care	10am - 11am	Microsoft Teams
Wednesday 19th	Regulate Together At Home	10am - 12pm	Epicentre, Armagh
Thursday 20th	Child Sexual Abuse Awareness Workshop with Marie McTaggart	10am - 12pm	Microsoft Teams
Saturday 22nd	Listen Closely with A. O'Prey <i>(Can attend either as stand alone, or following completion of PAUSE and CALM AFFECT)</i>	10am - 4pm	Microsoft Teams
Wednesday 26th	Core Issues in Kinship Care	10am - 1pm	Microsoft Teams
JUNE 2027			
Wednesday 2nd	Basic Paediatric First Aid Awareness	6pm - 8pm	Microsoft Teams
Wednesday 9th	Safeguarding Workshop	10am - 11am	Microsoft Teams
Thursday 17th	Recording in Foster Care Workshop	7pm - 8pm	Microsoft Teams

COURSE INFORMATION

ADHD AWARENESS

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder is an internationally recognised medical condition affecting between 5-10% of school aged children.

It is characterised by the core behavioural symptoms of inattention, impulsivity and hyper-activity.

The workshop will provide an overview of ADHD whilst exploring the impact of this condition on the child and family.

ADVERSITY, TRAUMA & RESILIENCE

- Why being trauma aware is everyone's business
- The prevalence of trauma and adversities and the potential impact on the developing brain and on individuals across their lifespan
- The importance of well being
- The benefits of an adversity aware and trauma informed approach
- The role of relationships in promoting resilience and recovery
- The principles of a trauma informed approach

BASIC FIRST AID

Keith Saunderson: Blay Training

These informal sessions will give you the basics of First Aid needed in the initial stages of an emergency. No previous knowledge of first aid needed.

You will learn to deal with someone who:

- is unconscious and breathing
- is unconscious and NOT breathing
- is choking
- is bleeding
- has a burn or scald
- is in shock
- has other ailments

BUILDING CONNECTIONS: BRICK BY BRICK

Do you remember the magic of building with Lego when you were young? In this practical workshop we will look at the fundamentals behind bricks-based therapy and how to start using this approach with your child at home. Through practical playful building activities, you will discover how this approach can help create connection, build skills and make learning fun. This workshop will be delivered by Nuala Fitzpatrick, Fostering Attainment and Achievement Project Worker.

COURSE INFORMATION

CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE AWARENESS WORKSHOP

Delivered online by Marie McTaggart

Marie previously worked in the Child Care Centre in Belfast which is a specialist resource which deals specifically in the investigation and treatment of child sexual abuse in children between the ages of 3 to 13 years.

Marie has over 20 years of significant experience in this area.

The training will look at the treatment and impact issues for children who have experienced sexual abuse.

SAFEGUARDING WORKSHOP

Delivered online by Marie McTaggart

This training session will explore the following:

- Understanding of what is meant by safeguarding and protecting children and young people
- Have an understanding of ways in which children and young people are at risk of harm and abuse
- Have an understanding of what action you should take if you are worried about a child or young person who may be at risk
- Have knowledge of where you can get advice and support when you are worried about a child or young person

CORE ISSUES IN KINSHIP FOSTER CARE

- Legal issues and LAC reviews
- Impact of Fostering and contact issues
- Safer caring and health and safety within the home

CORE ISSUES IN FOSTERING

- Impact of Fostering on the Family and contact issues
- Legal issues and participation in LAC reviews
- Safer caring, health and safety, allegations and recordings
- Moving on, attachment and permanence

COURSE INFORMATION

COTHÚ WORKSHOP

The Cothú (meaning nurture) programme is an incredibly respectful way of supporting Neurodivergent children. Cothú provides you with insights and perspectives authentically because it is designed by people who are Autistic themselves. Taking a new approach, away from the deficit-based medical model, Cothú offers a neuro-affirming stance with practical solutions that positively benefit the children in your care.

This will be delivered for three consecutive weeks for 2.5 hours per session by Clare, a Fostering Attainment and Achievement Project Worker. As an autistic adult and advocate, Clare takes a neuro-affirmative approach to support children and young people. Along with a master's specialising in autism, Clare is a licensed, accredited practitioner of the Cothú programme.

Connect with other carers and get helpful tips and guidance from Autistic trainers who will guide and support you to meet the needs of the children in your care.

Week 1 - Introduction to Neurodiversity

Neurodiversity myths and facts and ways of understanding an autistic child.

Week 2 - What it feels like to be Autistic

How Autistic children sense and learn. How children best play, create, and communicate.

Home Life

Sensory needs and understand that everyone has sensory needs. Ideas on how best to organise and make accommodations around non-structured time.

Week 3 - Caring Autistically

Importance of support and self-care because as carers we cannot fill from an empty cup.

Caring for a happy, authentic, Autistic child.

Autistic Pride and what it means to raise an authentic, Autistic child.

Carers should attend all three sessions as the programme is designed to complement learning each week.

LUNCH & LEARN PROGRAMME

The Fostering Network - Lunch & Learn Sessions.

If interested in a place on any of the sessions below, please send your e-mail address indicating which course well in advance.

Date	Time	Lunch & Learn
17/11/2026	12:00pm-12:45pm	Girls and Autism
15/12/2026	12:00pm-12:45pm	Puberty and Autism
19/01/2027	12:00pm-12:45pm	Masking
16/02/2027	12:00pm-12:45pm	Autism and Eating Differences
16/03/2027	12:00pm-12:45pm	Autistic Communication

COURSE INFORMATION

CSE & HSB AWARENESS

This specialist training supports Foster Carers to understand and respond to two key safeguarding concerns: **Child Sexual Exploitation** (CSE) and **Harmful Sexual Behaviour** (HSB). Both issues can significantly impact the safety, wellbeing and development of children and young people in care and require a knowledgeable, confident, trauma-informed response.

The training explores Child Sexual Exploitation as a form of abuse where a child is coerced, manipulated, or deceived into sexual activity, often within relationships that may appear consensual or trusting. It helps foster carers recognise grooming processes, including online exploitation, and understand the complex reasons why young people may not identify themselves as victims or disclose their experiences.

Alongside this, the course provides a clear understanding of Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB), which refers to sexual behaviours displayed by children and young people that are developmentally inappropriate and potentially harmful to themselves or others. Foster Carers will learn to distinguish between normal sexual development and behaviours that are concerning or abusive, and to understand the underlying causes, including trauma, attachment disruption, and adverse childhood experiences.

With a strong emphasis on practical application, the training equips Foster Carers to identify early warning signs, assess risks, and respond appropriately and proportionately. Participants will develop confidence in managing incidents, implementing clear boundaries and safety plans and responding in a calm, non-judgemental, trauma-informed way.

The training also highlights the importance of building trusting relationships, maintaining placement stability and working collaboratively with social workers and multi-agency partners. By enhancing understanding and strengthening safeguarding practice, this course empowers Foster Carers to provide safe, nurturing environments that support recovery, resilience, and positive outcomes for children and young people.

FASD AWARENESS

Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders is an umbrella term used to describe a range of physical, cognitive and behavioural disabilities that a child can be born with if exposed to alcohol in the womb. This workshop will look at the causes of FASD before exploring the impact of this condition on the lives of children and families. Strategies to assist living with FASD will be discussed by an experienced parent.

COURSE INFORMATION

MAKING OUR NERVOUS SYSTEM WORK FOR US

Have you ever used the expression, “my nerves are away”?

How can we better understand our nervous system so it works for us?

In this workshop we are exploring the Polyvagal Theory and what it has to offer us. The Polyvagal Theory is based on the work of Stephen Porges and the Vagus Nerve and the way that it works within the body to help us interact with our world.

We all have times when the stresses of life shift our nervous system into a fight / flight or shutdown response. Learning to apply the Polyvagal Theory has the potential for us all, not only to understand autism better, but to help make our nervous system work with more flexibility.

In this workshop, participants will increase learning about our nervous system, the role of the Vagus Nerve, and the Polyvagal Theory. With an on-line version of the workbook, it will enable using this material with exercises to help to improve self-regulation. This work is psycho-education to present information and introduce self-help that is up to the participants how they make use of it. The resources were developed with support of Foster Carers in the Trust.

You can get the self-help booklet and on-line version at:

<https://www.ascert.biz/making-our-nervous-system-work-for-us/>

MANAGING STRESS IN FOSTERING

Any parent will say that being a parent has its own levels of stress. Some find the toddler years, with tantrums and boundless energy exhausting. Others struggle with preteens asserting their independence and of course teenagers due to their emotional struggles and desire for independence. Being a Foster Carer has additional stresses. One of the main struggles our young people are having now is levels of anxiety.

There is no ideal rule book for managing stress. It is not a one size fits all. So, this workshop will not try and tell you what works. It will explore ideas, strategies and resources that you can decide will work for you.

MEN WHO FOSTER

The course will be delivered over two evenings and the group will be exploring the idea of the 'positive male role model' to help identify ways in which men can be more effective carers.

Male foster carers continually highlight a number of significant issues affecting their role, such as how best to work with children who have been sexually abused and how to deal with unsubstantiated allegations of abuse in foster care.

This course will give participants the opportunity to consider the impact this has on safer caring, reflect on the emotions that arise and identify why it is important to confront sexism in practice.

COURSE INFORMATION

PROMOTING A TRAUMA - INFORMED APPROACH

The aims of the session:

- To enhance understanding of the widespread impact of trauma and adversity
- To realise the potential path for healing, resilience and recovery
- To recognise the signs and symptoms of trauma in others by using a trauma lens
- To recognise signs and symptoms of secondary and vicarious trauma
- To develop knowledge and understanding of how to resist re-traumatising
- To explore appropriate responses to those who may have experienced trauma and adversity

*****Foster Carers should have completed Level 1 training before attending Level 2*****

RECORDING IN FOSTER CARE

Foster Carers:

- Understand the legal and policy framework in respect of record keeping
- Understand the 'why, what, when & how' of recording
- Are aware of the importance of child centred, factual recording which supports the child's sense of worth.

THE 4 R's - Regulate, Relate, Reason, Repair

This three-hour workshop will introduce an amalgamation of the pioneering work of Dr Bruce Perry, Dr Dan Hughes (P.A.C.E.) and Louise Bomber in helping carers and children to regulate, relate, reason and repair. This is an interactive session that will equip carers with practical strategies for Foster Carers to develop a toolkit for home and for school.

The session will be facilitated by June Onyekwelu who has lived experience of children who are looked after in residential care and foster care. June has been delivering attachment and trauma training to Foster Carers, residential teams and professionals for over 15 years.

UNDERSTANDING & MANAGING ANXIETY

This workshop focuses on anxiety - both at home and in school. Anxiety can often lead to children and young people withdrawing from family and peers, struggling to attend school or lowered grades as well as presenting itself through behaviour and actions. Strategies are presented to effectively reduce anxiety by building on a foundation of understanding.

This workshop is delivered by StriveNI.

COURSE INFORMATION

LGBTQIA+ AWARENESS WORKSHOP

Both workshops delivered by James McGoldrick from The Rainbow Project

This awareness session provides a comprehensive overview of LGBTQIA+ identities, issues and experiences within Northern Ireland.

We explore topics including terminology; health and wellbeing; history; myths and facts and ways to become strong allies.

Completion of this session will better equip you to understand and support the needs for LGBTQIA+ individuals.

Key Focus Areas:

- Understanding of identity in regard to sexual and gender identities.
- Explore intersectionality within the LGBTQIA+ community.
- Explore key language and terminology for LGBTQIA+ people.
- Understanding of health and wellbeing needs for LGBTQIA+ people.
- Explore Transitioning and Trans Healthcare.
- Understanding of barriers LGBTQIA+ people can face.
- Learn more about LGBTQIA+ discrimination and why it happens.
- Grow in allyship towards LGBTQIA+ people.

TRANSGENDER & NON - BINARY AWARENESS

Both workshops delivered by James McGoldrick from The Rainbow Project

This awareness session provides a deeper overview of Transgender & Non-Binary specific identities within the LGBTQIA+ community.

As well as exploring the issues and experiences of Trans & Non-Binary people in Northern Ireland, this also includes topics on terminology; health and wellbeing; history; myths and facts and ways to become strong allies.

Key Focus Areas:

- Increase understanding of The Rainbow Project & our services available for Trans & Non-Binary people.
- Clarity on key language and terminology in regard to Trans & Non-Binary people.
- Build understanding of gender identity, gender expression & gender non-conforming identities.
- Increase understanding of the health and wellbeing needs and experiences for Trans & Non-Binary people in Northern Ireland.
- Increase understanding on the key barriers that impact Trans & Non-Binary people.
- Learn more about what Trans & Non-Binary discrimination is, why it happens and what the impact is.
- Grow in ability to become stronger allies to Trans & Non-Binary friends, family, colleagues or loved ones.

COURSE INFORMATION

Anthony O'Prey from O'Prey Coaching is offering a series of Teen Coaching workshops to support you in your role as a Foster Carer.

Anthony will cover topics such as **Practical Behaviour Management Skills, Interpersonal Communication Skills, Reflective Practice and Health Promotion**. Anthony will invite you to share your experiences and challenges as a Foster Carer in a supportive, non-judgemental way, while **exploring tips & techniques that can help**.

TEEN Coaching: Part 1

P.A.U.S.E.

'**P.A.U.S.E.**' teaches behaviour management through merging reflective practice with shared learning approaches. This workshop encourages participants to consider the day-to-day challenges they experience with their young people while learning practical skills to reduce this challenge as well as protecting their relationships.

TEEN Coaching: Part 2

(you will need to have completed PAUSE Workshop)

THE C.A.L.M. AFFECT

'**The C.A.L.M. Affect**' workshop has four reflective-practice elements to it. It looks at the quality of our communication and self-awareness when managing challenging behaviour; it encourages reflection on how 'rejection' can impact on behaviour and teaches skills in listening and motivation.

LISTEN CLOSELY

Anthony O'Prey, from O'Prey Coaching, will cover topics such as **Practical Behaviour Management Skills, Interpersonal Communication Skills, Reflective Practice and Health Promotion**. Anthony will invite you to share your experiences and challenges as a Foster Carer in a supportive, non-judgemental way, while **exploring tips & techniques that can help**.

'**Listen Closely...**' teaches interpersonal skills in influence & persuasion for managing challenging behaviour. This workshop focuses on 10 key areas to help achieve agreement, while helping participants develop their listening skills.

Discover TEEN Coaching's **10 Commandments of Agreement** to establish cooperation with ANY teenager! Explore ways to...

- Achieve agreement through active listening.
- Influence a 'yes' response.
- Use a 'whining' meter.
- Acknowledge the positive before it happens.
- Use cause & effect effectively.
- Get to know their friends (even the ones you don't like).
- Get to know their idols (even the ones you don't like).
- Use 'positive' language effectively.
- Use privileges effectively.
- Always remember your influence.

COURSE INFORMATION

UNDERSTANDING CHILDHOOD TRAUMA AND WAYS TO NUTURE HEALING

This two-session training aims to support foster carers to understand how the experience of trauma in childhood affects children and young people. It will help foster carers to make sense of some of the behaviours that children in their care may display. It will also support foster carers to understand ways to help children to recover from childhood trauma, and the important role that foster carers play in providing healing experiences.

The course will be led by Dr Karalyn Hill, clinical psychologist with the Scaffold Therapeutic and Consultation Service for Children in Care. There will also be input from Scaffold's multi-disciplinary team including their specialist therapist for children in foster carer, their occupational therapist and their speech and language therapist.

Below is some feedback about previous courses delivered by the Scaffold Service on childhood trauma

"I found this extremely informative, it really makes you stop and think about developmental trauma"

"Really insightful training"

"The training was delivered really well. Highlighted attachment in a new way that I had never considered before"

The course will be delivered over two sessions

- **Wednesday 7th October from 10am – 1pm**
- **Wednesday 14th October from 10am – 1pm**

Tea and coffee will be available from 9.30am and the training will commence at 10am. Other refreshments will be provided during the training.

Please note it is important to be able to attend both sessions

COURSE INFORMATION

REGULATE TOGETHER AT HOME

We would like to invite you to attend our 'Regulate Together at Home' training course. The course has been developed by the Scaffold Therapeutic and Consultation Service for Children in Care

This course aims to help carers to learn practical strategies that can be used at home to support children to feel safe and calm in their bodies. This is an important way to help children with behaviours such as

- **Anxiety**
- **Defiant or aggressive behaviour**
- **Emotional outbursts**
- **Refusal to co-operate**
- **Difficulties settling down**
- **Difficulties concentrating on homework**
- **Difficulties settling for bedtime**

The course is delivered by Karalyn Hill (Clinical Psychologist), Pauline Corr, (Occupational Therapist) and Anna Kelly (Speech and Language Therapist).

It will take place over four sessions

- ◇ Wed 14th April from 10am-12pm
- ◇ Wed 21st April from 10am-12pm
- ◇ Wed 28th April from 10am-12pm
- ◇ Wed 19th May from 10am -12pm

Please note it is important to be able to commit to all of the sessions

All previous carers who have attended this course said that they would recommend it to other carers. Below is some of the feedback we've received about the course.

"An excellent course" "Learnt a lot" "Very beneficial"

"I found this course extremely informative and relaxing"

Fostering in a Digital World Safeguarding App- Newly Updated- Out Now!!!

"The most powerful safeguarding tool is an educated and empowered child" Jim Gamble (Ineqe Group)

The Fostering Digital World app is created in partnership with Fostering and Adoption NI and INEQE Safeguarding Group. It has been designed with, and for, foster carers and social workers.

The app provides users with information that's relevant to their trust, including essential contact details, and allows them to access the training, resources, and advice they need.

It's a digital support system that gives carers a helping hand in empowering children and young people to better protect themselves in the online world.



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App Store



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